



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## RUSSIA AND POPULAR EDUCATION.

BY HIS EXCELLENCY, CONSTANTIN POBIEDONOSTSEFF, PROCURATOR  
OF THE HOLY SYNOD OF RUSSIA.

*(A reply to Prince Kropotkin.)*

---

THE editor of this REVIEW has invited me to write an article on the present situation of Russia. That is a task, however, to which I do not feel myself equal. It is not only beyond the strength of an old man, whose strength is worn out, but it is even beyond the unaided strength of any individual scholar or journalist in Russia. It is not difficult to write a political pamphlet on such a subject, and pamphlets of the kind come frequently enough from the press of both hemispheres. The writings that issue from Congresses in which Russia is the theme are in general nothing more than political pamphlets inspired by doctrinal prejudices and the hatreds of pedants and party men. To this category belong the pamphlets of Kropotkin, a professional apostle of anarchy and socialism. Though a Russian, he does not know Russia, and is incapable of understanding his country; for the soul of the Russian people is a closed book to him which he has never opened. His impressions of the present state of Russia are based only on gossip and the tales invented by daily newspapers and their equally ignorant and incapable correspondents, as far as seeking the truth about men and facts is concerned.

I limit myself, therefore, to correcting some of the material errors that abound in Kropotkin's recent article in this periodical, which treats principally of the Russian system of administering the Universities and Schools. It is true that historically considered this system reveals a whole series of mistakes and wrong measures for which the Government is responsible. What Government is free from defects of this sort? Yet one thing

that should not be forgotten is that Russia is a "world" apart, and that her civilization has not passed through the discipline of several centuries of culture as has that of Western countries. It is, therefore, impossible to judge her according to the criterion yielded by another race, another history, another culture, itself trained and ripened through a long past, even without emphasizing the fact that this criterion is not an altogether fixed and definite standard in countries possessing this ancient culture. Another thing that should not be forgotten is that the password "liberty" is not a talisman capable of opening all secrets and solving all the questions of human existence. Kropotkin comments severely upon the meagreness of the amounts granted to Elementary Schools and the inadequacy of the schools themselves. He says:

"While even now we have in European Russia only one school for each 2,230 inhabitants, and while only one child out of every twenty or thirty children of school age goes to school (as against seven in England), the Ministry of Public Instruction, for years in succession under Alexander II., returned every year to the State Exchequer one-half of the poor allowance of \$4,000,000 a year for the primary schools, which was inscribed in the budget. It found no use for the money! And if the Ministry of Public Instruction spends now its budget allowance in full, it is because it has hit upon the following plan: It does not open schools of its own, but spends the money in subsidies to the village clergy, who, leaving aside their general ignorance, keep schools mostly on paper only. Their time being fully taken up by their regular duties (marriages, burials, etc.), they generally pay quite ignorant cantors, or retired soldiers, to attend to the schools. And all this is perfectly well known in Russia."

This accusation is based on a complete ignorance of the facts. Since Kropotkin left Russia the progress in this matter has been enormous and the correspondents on whose information he relies are, probably, as ignorant as himself. He has no knowledge of the village-clergy schools. The Elementary Schools are: (1.) those established by the Minister for Education; (2.) those established and maintained by the Zemstvos; (3.) those which are attached to the ecclesiastical parishes. The schools of this last class either did not exist at all in Kropotkin's time, or, if they existed, they were completely neglected; whereas, under the reign of Alexander III., they were placed on a new footing and grew rapidly. In spite of all Kropotkin may say from his biased point of view, the schools of this third class are the most serviceable to Russia. As a learned geographer and sociologist Kropotkin

ought to know that throughout the vast domains of the Empire the population is scattered in the most diverse manner. There are no roads, and the people live on the steppes, in the woods, in the marshes; their dwellings are sometimes separated by five to eight hundred versts of uncultivated and impassable country; and the inhabitants themselves, without culture, here and there even barbarous, gain a scanty living far from all means of communication and the necessities for industry and commerce. Is it possible for human power to supply all these spots and out-of-the-way places with regular schools and masters? And yet they contain human souls and Russian subjects. Happily, even in the least cultivated regions, churches are to be found; and it is these churches of our country which, existing everywhere, sow the seeds of civilization among the poor who inhabit these wastes that are veritable centres of light in darkness. It must be remembered that with such a state of things the main question in these regions is not that of beginning at once to instruct in the sciences, but that of inculcating in the people's minds notions of what is right and wrong, just and unjust, true and false; of teaching them the alphabet, teaching them writing, teaching them the principles of the Gospel, and of bringing their minds to the realization of spiritual truth. The school, therefore, must be simple and cheap, in accordance with the nature of the locality. Such is the principle of the parish school in Russia; yet, in proportion as the local conditions are more favorable, the school in many places develops these primitive rudiments into a more varied instruction and furnishes a complete course of elementary education. The progress made by these schools is much to their credit, and the State, recognizing this, makes them at present considerable grants (as much even as six million roubles), while, on the other hand, a similar sum, or more, is supplied by voluntary contributions. What Kropotkin says about the incapacity of the Village Clergy is certainly unjust. Perhaps in his time the ignorant schoolmasters of whom he speaks, often recruited from pensioned soldiers, were only too common. To-day we have a regular system of seminaries and training-colleges for the education of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, who are all the more necessary as the parish priest, engaged in his professional duties, cannot efficiently carry out school teaching. When Kropotkin alleges that the schools of the Caucasus and the Don Cossacks are

much more advanced than the ordinary Russian schools, he again betrays his ignorance of the facts, the condition of the schools in these regions being, on the contrary, much inferior.

Kropotkin proceeds: "The study of comparative state law was prohibited." This, perhaps, may have occurred a few times when prohibition, so to speak, had gone mad; but the madness was of very short duration, and the study in question is, on the contrary, widely pursued in the universities.

Kropotkin leads us once more into the midst of fable and gossip when he says:

M. Bogolépoff, in his younger days, was more or less of a Liberal; but, since he has obtained his nomination as Minister of Public Instruction, he has been a mere tool in the hands of the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Pobiedonostseff, a narrow-minded fanatic of the State religion, who—if it were only in his power—would have burned at the stake all protestants against Orthodoxy and Catholicism."

(1.) I had nothing to do with the business of the Educational Department. It was Bogolépoff who was entrusted with it; and when he says, "These two men, Bogolépoff and Pobiedonostseff, reported the Kieff affair to the Czar," he asserts what is untrue. I was totally ignorant of this Kieff affair, which concerned two ministers only, Bogolépoff and the Minister for the Interior. (2.) Until his appointment, Bogolépoff was quite unknown to me, and afterwards we remained as strangers to each other. Indeed, he was, if anything, hostile and opposed to me, and never once consulted me.

Kropotkin further says:

"When the Kieff disorders were reported to Nicholas II., he said, first, that he had had enough of these students' riots and would close all the universities."

This is false from beginning to end. Who heard what the Czar said? Kropotkin's correspondents did not. They simply invented, as they invent every day for the press. What a series of platitudes! "He spoke *next* of Port Arthur, and *finally* issued an order for military service." In order to get at the true significance of *next* and *finally*, it should be remembered that our Emperor never issues such orders on his personal responsibility. He contents himself with confirming the decisions of the various executive councils and the resolutions of his ministers in cases prescribed by the law.

The decree concerning the military service of students guilty

of creating an agitation against the university curriculum was published independently of any initiative on the part of the Emperor. The ministers, in a Cabinet meeting that had been called in consequence of these university disorders, deemed it necessary to have recourse to this punishment, and their resolution was submitted for the Emperor's approval. A regulation was published, according to which the application of the penalty in each case was made to depend on a special committee comprising the ministers whose departments were concerned, and the decisions of this committee were to be valid in law without needing an imperial sanction. The Kieff affair, therefore, was settled in this way, and the will of the Emperor had no share in it. When Kropotkin affirms that "these students were carried away as criminals in absolute secrecy, to some unknown destination presumed to be Port Arthur," he says what is quite imaginary. Nothing of the kind took place; and, without any secrecy, the students were quietly sent off by rail to their respective regiments, the Minister for War being present at their departure and arranging for the comfort of their journey. What is unfortunately true is, that the measure in question was applied at once to one hundred and eighty students, which gave it a peculiarly rigorous character; whereas the law was meant to apply only to a few exceptional cases.

Kropotkin's article furnishes another striking example of the monstrous lies spread abroad by the press concerning the internal condition of Russia, as also of Kropotkin's complete ignorance of the country to which he formerly belonged. He has not hesitated to give currency to the following absurd story, which he has picked up somewhere and which I quote in his own words:

"Finally, the Committee of the Ministers, assuming for the *first time* the rôle of a ministry, discussed the Imperial order and insisted upon its withdrawal. It refused to acquiesce in the will of the Czar to proclaim a state of siege, and it obtained the dismissal of the St. Petersburg Chief of Police, General Kleigels."

Now, no such thing did take place or could take place, for anything of the kind would have been contrary to all law; and, as a matter of fact, rightly or wrongly, General Kleigels has *never ceased* occupying his functions as Chief of Police.

Lastly, Kropotkin has no other panacea to propose for the happiness and welfare of Russia than the ever-recurring nostrum

of professional politicians, "the Constitution," "the Chamber of Representatives," and "the power of the governing majority." Being an anarchist he chooses what in reality would be the surest means of bringing about anarchy in the country which he has abjured. He says that, to speak plainly, Russia has outgrown the autocratic form of government. But, even if we were to admit the truth of this, God forbid we should seek for the amelioration of this form of government in the remedy proposed by Kropotkin. If it were attempted, all Russia would rise against this worst of all tyrannies, *tyranny in the mass*. He ought to know that to-day almost everywhere in Europe we may say the various States have outgrown the *representative form* of government, and that everywhere serious minds are protesting against the tyranny of parliamentary majorities at once incapable and turbulent. There is plenty of solid literature on the subject; for example, in America, Godkin's book on "The Unforeseen Tendencies of Democracy." France, Austria, Germany, Italy all feel themselves powerless to make headway with their badly-working representation and their present parliamentary machinery. One may safely assert that this question is one of the most important in political science, a fatal problem of the Sphinx placed for solution between the nineteenth and twentieth century. Yet, Kropotkin persists at such a time in maintaining doctrines already worn out, which were the creed of pedants in the first half of the nineteenth century.

C. POBIEDONOSTSEFF.